

Statement of Kim A. Ellis as witness to Cessna 310 (N1246G) accident on February 27, 2017. I am a private pilot (not current), single engine rated, and have worked in the airport/aviation industry for 44 years.

Friday, 2/24/17

Time Unk: I saw the subject aircraft parked in the transient line in front of the terminal building. I also saw one male and several female passengers exiting the aircraft. I did not know which individual was the pilot. I did not see anything unusual or out of the ordinary.

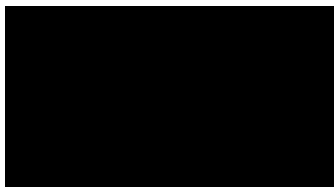
Monday, 2/27/17

0700: I saw the aircraft parked in what appeared to be the same parking spot as it was on the previous Friday.

@1610: I was in my office in the airport terminal building. My office has a somewhat obstructed view of the transient parking. I heard what I believed to be the engine run of the aircraft and noted how much power the pilot was applying. This seemed very unusual since the aircraft was still in the transient parking area. I say unusual, because I can hear just about every aircraft that starts up in the transient parking and the pilot appeared to be carrying an excess amount of power for an initial start up.

@1620: I was on the terminal patio deck with an unobstructed view of the departure end of Ry 09. Weather at the time was IFR with light rain, light wind from the east, ceiling @ 1,000 feet. I saw the aircraft holding short of Ry 09 for what appeared to be longer than normal. I speculated he was waiting for his IFR release and continued to watch. I noticed again how much power the pilot seemed to be carrying while holding short of the runway. I often see and hear aircraft at that location and do not recall another aircraft with this much power. I commented to another individual how much fuel he was burning at that power setting.

@ 1640: I was inside the terminal building in the hallway adjacent to the patio deck and saw the aircraft about midfield as he was rotating for takeoff. I watched the aircraft as he started a turn to the north and disappear into the cloud deck. I did not notice anything unusual or out of the ordinary. His climb rate and angle appeared normal compared to similar aircraft I have seen depart under these same weather conditions. Very shortly after the aircraft entered the cloud deck, the airport crash alarm was activated by ATC, and looking northeast I saw a column of smoke. At that point I responded to the accident scene.



March 2, 2017
Federal Aviation Administration



To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Nasser Michael Elsaleh and I work at AIA flight school located inside the terminal building at Riverside Municipal Airport. I was working in the office/store on Monday February 27th, 2017. I have worked at Alliance International flight school for 3 years at the Riverside Airport. I am a Private Pilot with Instrument rating and I am an Advanced Ground Instructor. I also have my Bachelors in Aviation management and I intern at Ontario Airport with Airport Operations.

My first interaction with the Male Pilot was on Saturday February 25th, 2017. He came inside our flight school/ pilot shop and bought NACO Approach plates and a low en route chart. There was nothing abnormal with this interaction. He paid with his credit card and left.

On Monday February 27th, 2017, I had some interactions with the pilot and passengers of the Cessna 310 before they boarded the aircraft that had the accident. I noticed 3 older women and 1 younger girl inside of the terminal. A couple hours passed and the man I met during the transaction on Saturday, February 25th, who bought the IFR charts, came into my office to ask a question. In my opinion, he looked rushed, he greeted me as he walked toward me where I sit on the computer. As he was walking toward me he bumped into an item rack I have in the middle area of the store. I greeted him and he asked me a question. He asked along the lines of, if i knew how to file an IFR flight plan. I do not know if he was instrument rated, but I pointed him to a sheet of paper we have on the wall with a list of phone numbers. I told him to call the briefer while pointing to the number listed 1-800-wxbrief. As I told him this, the ladies that were sitting inside the terminal came into the store. He turned to them and told them not to follow him and to go back inside the terminal. I gave him a post-it-note and he wrote the number from the wall down on the post it. He used the ramp door exit, where I assume he walked to his plane.

After he left my office, I proceeded to the hallway to greet the ladies. They were sitting right outside my office and I asked them if they wanted something from the store. They said no, they were just anxious to get back home. They mentioned they were from San Jose. One said she had work the next morning. So in my opinion, I believe there was a little pressure for the pilot. I'm presuming, but It looked like the man wanted to get everyone home that day. I went back into my office and got a magnet I have that has a phone number for a cab company. I took it to one of the ladies and i noticed another one appeared to be talking to a cab or car company making alternate plans. I heard some of the portion of her phone conversation from inside the store, but I do not know how the conversation resolved. I did hear the lady on the phone ask for a bigger car,

like a van, she said that they had luggage. I did not see how much luggage they were taking with them.

A friend from next door, Ashan Fernando, came into my office and I told him their scenario and we both together told airport operations, Roger Kane, that the man (pilot) asked me how to file an IFR flight plan. He told us that he would inform tower. Roger Kane went inside his vehicle where I assume he contacted tower, but i don't have fist hand knowledge of that. It was not too long after. that we saw the man (pilot) and the ladies exit the terminal doors and head out onto the ramp. I saw all this from inside my office. I have windows which gives me a good view of the ramp. I had the door opened so I also heard him having troubles starting up his left engine. In my opinion, it looked like he flooded it. It also didn't look like he was being patient with it either. He kept trying to start, and some points, it felt like he held it around 10 seconds. Eventually it started up and I still was in my office with two radios, one on the ground frequency, and one on tower.

I felt like I heard a lot of red flags during his communications with ground, such as unfamiliar with the departure procedure and confused with taxi instructions. One thing did stand out, I felt like I heard him shake, as if he was nervous. As he read back the IFR clearance again to correct himself, it is as if his thumb was coming off and going back on the microphone. After I heard the take off clearance, I witnessed the take off and watched the landing gear retract. Nothing looked abnormal about the takeoff from my perspective. This is where I looked away and was focused on closing up the shop. The next thing I heard were the loud sirens to alert Airport operations.

I only had this brief interaction with the pilot and passengers, and I hope this helps. If you have any questions, or need me to clarify anything, please email me back at [REDACTED] or call me on my personal phone at [REDACTED]

Best Regards,
Nasser Michael Elsaleh

Riverside café witness, Delmy Pennington Statement:

Ms. Pennington stated that the occupants went back and forth to the aircraft about 3 times in what seemed like they were waiting for the weather to improve for departure. The third time they returned from the aircraft, they went into the café and sat a booth. Before they ordered, Ms. Pennington said the other lady sitting next to the older gentleman looked outside and observed the weather had improved and told the gentleman lets go. All got up and went back to aircraft before ordering. Ms. Pennington observed them enter the aircraft and start. After start and while taxiing, the aircraft appeared to jerk causing the aircraft's tail to move up and down (she said that she hadn't seen this type of action before.

INSPECTOR STATEMENT

To: Stephen Stein, Air Safety Investigator, NTSB

Subject: N1246G Aircraft Accident Riverside California

On March 1st at approximately 0800 PST, myself and inspector Robert Michaelson conducted an investigation into the RAS Jetport, Fueling facilities located on Riverside Airport.

Specifically we spoke to Carlos, the refuler who serviced to and maintained the fuel truck. He provided us with the Avgas Refuler Inspection Records for the truck and the Inspection Record for the Fuel Tanks (sheets attached to this report). No anomalies were noted.

We the proceeded to inspect the truck, where Carlos conducted a fuel sample test at the nozzle and after the filter. We inspected approximately three (3) gallons of fuel and there was no water or particulates evident in the sample provided.



Keith A. Frable
Manager RAL-FSDO

03/03/2016
Date

(STATEMENT #4)

Friday March 3, 2017

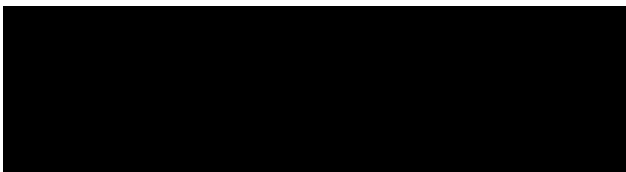
Statement of account for the FAA by Carlos Quiroz

Friday February 24, 2017 was the first time I (Carlos Quiroz) made contact with Nouri Hijazi when he walked over from the terminal building to the FBO. I did notice that he was elderly in age and hunched over as he approached me outside on the ramp. It was evident he was in pain. He asked to use the restroom. After he relieved himself he asked for assistance in obtaining a rental car. He appeared nervous and tired. After I handed him the keys to his rental car he drove towards the terminal. I walked out to the flight line and looked in the direction of his aircraft and there was 3 people and approximately 4 pieces of luggage on the ground next to the aircraft.

On Saturday, February 25, 2017 I was fueling another aircraft on the field and I noticed Mr. Hijazi wandering around the flight line. He approached me and asked me where the Philips 66 self serve was at? A few minutes later he returned and told me he was unable to find it. I gently took him by the arm and walked him over close to it and pointed to the self serve pump. Mr. Hijazi said "I cant do that". He then asked me about our fuel price off the truck. He then asked me to fuel his aircraft and gave me the tail number N1246G. When asked how much fuel he needed he paused and then said top it off. I fueled the aircraft with 54.2 gallons and got his credit card information. During this time I asked him how long he has been flying and he stated for over 40 years. He did state that he was not comfortable flying into large airports and I only fly into small airports which is why he chose to fly into KRAL. Again I asked how many years have you been flying and he then stated over 50 years. During this conversation he appeared unsure of himself and lacked of confidence.

The day of his departure (Monday, February 27, 2017) Mr Hijazi dropped off his rental car at the FBO and I gave him a ride to the terminal. He did ask me to hurry so he could use the restroom. I did not notice any passengers or luggage at that time. I told him to have a nice day as he exited the car. I did not have any interaction with the passengers or assist with loading the luggage into the aircraft.

Carlos Quiroz



(STATEMENT # 1)

Statement from Rodger Kane Jr Aircraft Accident Cessna 310 (N1246G) February 27, 2017

Monday Approx. 12:00PM 2/27/2017

Monday Feb 27, 2017 I was talking briefly with a gentleman and 4 other women in the terminal that were waiting to fly back to San Jose Ca, the gentlemen seemed pre-occupied pacing back and forth in the terminal seating area. I went on my way continuing airport business, upon returning back minutes later I started talking with Mike from AIA Flight School, when the 5 occupants started leaving the terminal and walking to the plane (N1246G) tied down in the Airport Transient Parking Area.

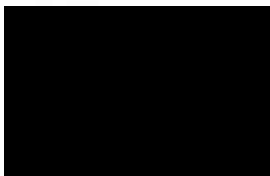
They all boarded and then I heard on the ATC frequency (121.7) the gentleman request a VFR clearance to San Jose when the tower started reading it back to the gentleman, the gentleman asked the tower numerous times, to hold on and asked the tower to repeat. The tower instructed the gentleman that the VFR clearance was cancelled and that the pilot needs to file an IFR clearance. I watched the occupants as they all exited the airplane returning back into the terminal. Meanwhile, I was talking with Mike when the gentleman came in and asked if anyone could help him file a IFR clearance, at that moment I had to go and unsecure a gate and returned back just as they were heading towards the plane.

They all boarded the plane and the right engine was started by the pilot was having trouble with the left engine. It was approximately 3 -5 minutes before the left engine finally started. While calling for their IFR clearance he was given the clearance but had a very hard time reading it back telling the tower to hold on.

ATC gave him the progressive to runway 9. On reading back the progressive, he finally had to be walked through the read back by the tower and also the Riverside Departure Procedures. The tower finally gave the pilot the approval to take off it took him a couple minutes to proceed out onto the runway when he stopped again for a couple minutes before finally taking off. I watched as he lifted off and then wheels up at about Delta, as the plane proceeding to climb and then flying into a large grey cloud at the approach end of runway 27 giving the visual that he was kind of turning towards the north instead of what the clearance said, right hand turn south downwind, so I started back towards the terminal and then I heard a large explosion along with a large heavy plume of smoke and the alarm sounded.

I jumped into the Rapid Intervention vehicle and headed back towards the approach end of runway 27. I clearly could see that there was smoke off field, and then the tower advised me that it was the airplane that had just taken off runway 9 which was at approximately 16:40, a Cessna 310 (N1246G) heading to San Jose, CA containing 5 passengers.

Rodger Kane Jr



February 28, 2017

Investigators Statement,

Robert Michaelson ASI Riverside FSDO

On the February 27, 2017 at approximately 3:50 p.m. I was looking out the window of my office onto the tarmac at Riverside Airport when I noticed a Cessna 310 N1246G getting ready to leave. The pilot started the right engine which started normally without any issues. The pilot then went to start the left engine and made multiple attempts to get it to start. This went on for approximately 10 minutes before the engine finally started. After starting there was a large amount of black smoke that came out of the exhaust. After finally getting both engines started the pilot ran both engines up to full power which caused the aircraft to jerk forward. The pilot then brought the engines back to idle and allowed them engines to stabilize after which the pilot then ran the engines to full power and back down idle.


Robert Michaelson